

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

SENT TO D.C.  
7-9-99

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Four Nineteen Building

other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

2. Location

street & number 419 E. 83rd Street  not for publication

city or town Chicago  vicinity

state Illinois code IL county Cook code 031 zip code 60619

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

William C. Wheeler 6-30-99  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

Illinois Historic Preservation Agency  
State of Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official/Title Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register.  
 See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register  
 See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Four Nineteen Building -  
Name of Property

Cook, Illinois  
County and State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

**Category of Property**

(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
0	0	objects
1	0	Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

n/a

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

n/a

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Commerce/specialty store

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

vacant not in use

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Other: house with canopy and bays /gas station

**Materials**

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation concrete

walls brick

roof ceramic tile

other wood

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

Period of Significance

1928

Significant Dates

1928

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

n/a

Cultural Affiliation

n/a

Architect/Builder

unknown

Primary location of additional data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

Name of repository:

Illinois Institute of Technology

Four Nineteen Building  
Name of Property

Cook, Illinois  
County and State

**10. Geographical Data**

Acreage of Property less than one acre

**UTM References**

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1 | 16 | 449930 | 4621390 |  
Zone Easting Northing  
2 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

3 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |  
Zone Easting Northing  
4 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

**Boundary Justification**

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title Jean Louise Guarino, Architectural Historian

organization \_\_\_\_\_ date February 1, 1999

street & number 1243 W. Ardmore, No. 3 telephone 773-989-8927

city or town Chicago state IL zip code 60660

**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets**

**Maps**

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**

Representative **black and white photographs** of the property.

**Additional Items**

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

**Property Owner**

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Yvonne A. and Ola L. Polk

street & number 8379 S. Kimbark Avenue telephone 773-375-2524

city or town Chicago state IL zip code 60619

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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## National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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FOUR NINETEEN BUILDING

### Four Nineteen Building: Narrative Description

The Four Nineteen Building is located at 419 E. 83<sup>rd</sup> Street, in Chicago's Chatham neighborhood. Now vacant, Four Nineteen was erected in 1928 and stands as a wonderful example of the pre-1945 House with Canopy and Bays filling station type. This one-story, rectangular building has a concrete foundation, load-bearing brick walls, flat roof and parapets. A gabled canopy supported by two brick piers is attached to the center of the front (north) elevation, which is flanked by two garage bays on each side. Four Nineteen is fronted by a concrete driveway, and ringed by a small, open lot with an alley behind to the south, and alleys to the east and west. The structure faces 83<sup>rd</sup> Street, which is primarily residential, with some commercial structures. Its immediate neighbors consist of a multi-unit apartment building to the east, a Kentucky Fried Chicken to the west and townhouses directly across 83<sup>rd</sup> Street.

The exterior of Four Nineteen has retained its integrity, and all elevations have original steel casement windows, concrete sills and wood lintels. The structure's brickwork is especially distinctive, as all elevations are composed of clinker bricks, which have a swelled, cracked appearance created by overexposure to heat during the coal-fired kiln process. Some of the clinker bricks are marked "IBCO," indicating that they were produced by Illinois Brick Company in Chicago. These hard, durable bricks are laid in an English bond pattern, and the brickwork is skintled, meaning that the bricks are set roughly at different angles, recessing or projecting beyond the wall line. The clinkers are also used to create round arches over the north (front) elevation's two doorways. Together, the clinker bricks and skintled brickwork create a rough, textural appearance, providing visual interest to a building that is devoid of ornamentation. Efflorescence is evident along the center of the north elevation, and on the canopy's brick piers.

The central house portion of the front (north) elevation has a steel double-casement window composed of thirty panes, which is flanked by two arched wood doors with vertical paneling. The westernmost door opens onto the office, while the easternmost door opens onto the ladies' rest room. These doors appear to be original, and each features brass hardware composed of metal strap hinges, handles and deadbolts. Originally, both doors had four small panes (about 3" x 3") that were arranged in a square and covered with clear glass. However, these panes have been replaced on the westernmost door with one square glass pane. The easternmost door has retained its four panes, although the original clear glass has been replaced with frosted glass.

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FOUR NINETEEN BUILDING

The north elevation's central office is flanked by two garage bays to the east and two to the west. The bays are separated by brick piers, and all four openings have been covered by plywood. The garage bays originally had wood overhead doors,<sup>1</sup> which were later replaced by aluminum overhead doors, two of which still exist in the east bays. The garage bays all have wood half timbering and stucco above, and the north elevation is terminated at each end by brick piers topped by limestone coping.

The north elevation parapet is composed of a front facing brick gable in the center, and Mission tiles in burnt red, mustard yellow and olive green above the garage bays. According to markings on various Mission tiles, they were manufactured by the Ludowici-Celadon Company in Chicago. Parapets along the north, east, and west elevations are topped by clay tile coping manufactured by the Streator Drain & Tile Company in Streator, Illinois. Original copper gutters situated directly below the north elevation's Mission tile parapet have largely been removed by vandals. Four Nineteen's flat roof is covered with sheet metal, and originally had a glass skylight above the ladies' rest room. This skylight was destroyed by vandals after 1980, and the opening subsequently covered with plywood.

Four Nineteen's gabled canopy has wood roof decking covered by Mission tiles identical to those used on the north elevation's parapet. Wood beams placed about 1' apart span the underside of the canopy, where an original, metal shade light fixture can still be seen. The front of the canopy features a wood pediment resting on the two brick piers. The pediment has vertical stickwork and two scrolled wood brackets beneath. In 1949, a large, round surface clock was mounted onto the center of the canopy's wood pediment. Manufactured by the Electric Time Company in New York, this Telechron motored advertising clock was stolen by vandals in July 1994. Two gasoline pumps were originally situated upon a narrow concrete island that stretches between the canopy's two brick piers. A second narrow, concrete island located on the front driveway housed an additional two pumps and two light standards. The posts of the light standards still exist, although all four pumps were removed by 1980.

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<sup>1</sup> Information obtained from Yvonne Polk's Jan. 15, 1999 phone interview with Roy Johnson. Johnson worked at Four Nineteen as a youth in 1929, and for many years afterward. He also owned Four Nineteen briefly in 1980, prior to Ms. Polk's purchase of the building.

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FOUR NINETEEN BUILDING

The east and west elevations each have two steel casement windows, which are composed of sixteen panes. The south (rear) elevation has a total of six steel casement windows. The third window to the left of this elevation has thirty panes, while the other five have sixteen panes each. The south elevation originally had two door openings—one opening onto the east bays and one opening onto the west bays. The east opening was infilled with brick at an unknown date. The lower portion of the west opening was later connected to a concrete block storage area, standing about 3' high, while the top portion was infilled with brick. The date of this alteration is unknown. A square concrete coal bin abuts the central portion of the south elevation, and opens onto the office via a small opening in the concrete foundation. This coal bin stands about 3' high, and was constructed the early 1930s, replacing a wood shed on the premises that originally stored Four Nineteen's coal.<sup>2</sup> A non-original red brick chimney with concrete coping is located along the south elevation.

Four Nineteen's rectangular plan has maintained its original configuration of three primary spaces—a central office flanked by a greasing room in the east garage bays, and a car washing/repair room in the west garage bays. The floors are concrete, perimeter walls are brick, and the partition walls separating the office from its two flanking rooms are hollow clay tile blocks, about 12" square, that are raked with vertical lines and laid in a basket weave pattern. The tile blocks are covered with gypsum board in the office and left exposed in the adjacent rooms.

Originally, the structure's wood roof frame was covered by metal lath and plaster in the office and two bathrooms, and left exposed in east and west garage bays. However, a 1980 furnace fire caused damage to both the office's plaster ceiling and the exposed roof frame in the west garage bays. As a result, the office ceiling was re-covered with wood lath and plaster, while the roof frame in the west bays was covered with gypsum board. Holes in the roof resulting from vandalism during the 1980s and 1990s have caused portions of the ceiling to collapse in these rooms. The exposed wood roof frame in the east bays consists of joists spaced about 15" on center, supporting tongue-and-groove roof decking. The decking boards are about 4" wide.

The concrete floor along the south side of the office is sunken about 15", and this area originally housed the building's coal-fired furnace. A cast iron radiator and furnace dating to 1980 are currently situated in this sunken area, which was originally separated from the office proper by a

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<sup>2</sup> Information obtained from Yvonne Polk's Jan. 15, 1999 phone interview with Roy Johnson.

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metal lath and plaster partition wall and doorway, the upper portions of which can still be seen. The office's south foundation wall has an opening for coal, which was raked from an exterior concrete bin that abuts the structure.

A ladies' rest room is located between the office and the east garage bays, and can only be accessed by its exterior door on the north elevation. Inspection of this bathroom was not possible, as its door is warped and has been closed for over five years. However, according to the current owner's recollection, this rest room has vinyl tile flooring, a ceramic tile wainscot with plaster walls and ceiling above, a porcelain wall-hung lavatory, water closet and radiator.

The office is connected with the east garage bays by a short corridor, which has a doorway leading to the men's rest room along its south wall. The men's rest room retains its original paneled wood door and hardware, with two ball-tipped hinges and doorknob. The rest room has vinyl tile flooring, a ceramic tile wainscot with plaster walls and ceiling above, a porcelain wall-hung lavatory, water closet and radiator.

The door opening between this corridor and the east garage bays retains its original paneled wood door. The east garage bays feature two full-sized grease pits in the floor, which stretch between the north and south walls, and originally provided "high pressure greasing"<sup>3</sup> for its customers' automobiles. Two radiators are located along the south wall of this room.

The west garage bays were also originally built with two full-sized grease pits, according to Roy Johnson, a long-time employee of Four Nineteen.<sup>4</sup> Mr. Johnson stated that the pits were later filled in with concrete to accommodate car washing in the west bays, but was unable to recall the date that this alteration occurred. A steel trap door is located in the floor of this room, and may have originally led to the grease pits. According to current owner Yvonne Polk, this door now leads to a shallow, sunken opening beneath, measuring about 3' square. A hot water tank is suspended from the ceiling along the south wall, which includes two cast iron radiators and a metal utility sink with three vertical basins. An original door opening along the south wall of the west room leads to an exterior concrete block storage shed. The west garage bays were later used for vulcanizing tires.

<sup>3</sup> Original building announcement for the opening of Four Nineteen.

<sup>4</sup> Information obtained from Yvonne Polk's Jan. 15, 1999 interview with Roy Johnson.



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FOUR NINETEEN BUILDING

**Four Nineteen Building: Narrative Statement of Significance**

The Four Nineteen Building, located in Chicago's Chatham neighborhood, is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C, due to its local significance related to architecture. Now vacant, this structure is a well-preserved example of the combination of two gas station types, the "House with Canopy" and "House with Bays" making it a House with Canopy and Bays gas station type, and stands as one of the few remaining pre-1945 stations on Chicago's South Side. Four Nineteen's period of significance is 1928, the year the building was constructed. Four Nineteen also represents an earlier era when many neighborhood gas stations were individually owned, and therefore exhibits distinctive features, such as the use of clinker bricks laid in a skintled pattern.

Like the automobiles they serviced, filling stations quickly evolved from a novelty to a national institution during the 1910s and 1920s. Originally, gasoline was transported in horse-drawn tank wagons to the local dry goods store, hardware store or blacksmith shop, where it was dispensed into the tin cans of motorists. Gasoline could also be obtained from street vendors who pushed small tank carts. From their tin cans, motorists filtered gasoline through a funnel into the tank of their automobile.<sup>1</sup> This messy process was simplified after 1910, when many local stores installed curbside pumps and underground storage tanks, allowing owners to fill their vehicles directly.

When station buildings appeared during the 1910s, they consisted primarily of brick or metal sheds that served as an attendant's office, and sometimes stored lubricating oils, greases, and equipment. Since the demand for gas exceeded the supply at that time, these utilitarian buildings did not need to project an image to attract customers.<sup>2</sup> In urban areas, early curbside and the shed-type filling stations were usually located in and around central business districts, while auto maintenance was conducted in the open, or in separate garages.

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<sup>1</sup> Daniel Vieyra. Fill'er up: An Architectural History of America's Gas Stations. Collier Books, 1979, p 3.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, p. 7.

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FOUR NINETEEN BUILDING

After World War I, assembly lines began producing inexpensive cars at a rapid rate, highway construction boomed, and the market for automotive petroleum quickly exploded. Although filling stations began to appear throughout the national landscape, the building type was still very new and unprecedented. Oil companies quickly realized that marketing strategies were necessary for consumers to distinguish one brand from another, and soon adopted logos and various gas station designs to convey a distinct image. In his book, Fill'er Up: An Architectural History of America's Gas Stations, Daniel Vieyra identifies three recurring themes in gas station design that were popular through the 1920s—Fantastic, Respectable and Domestic.

Fantastic gas stations were meant to project a unique, easily identifiable image, and built in the shape of boats, lighthouses, airplanes and space stations. Some stations glorified auto transportation and the related petroleum industry by taking on the form of gas pumps, gas cans and tank cars, while others portrayed cultural themes and exotic architecture, in the forms of icebergs, teepees, and pagodas.

Rather than appealing to curiosity, Respectable stations were meant to create an aura of prestige and grandeur by capturing the flavor of important civic buildings, such as courthouses, banks or university halls. The drive for Respectable stations received its impetus from the contemporary City Beautiful movement, and focused on making the structure a civic asset.<sup>3</sup> Elegant and often elaborate stations in the east and northeast were designed in the popular Classical Revival style, often topped by domes or fronted by elegant pedimented porticos. Sections of the west and southwest were graced with stations in the Spanish Mission style, some of which featured white stucco walls, Spanish tile roofs and bell towers.

Four Nineteen represents the more common Domestic station type, which resembled small houses and adopted a range of architectural styles. As service stations moved from central business districts into urban and suburban neighborhoods during the 1920s, Domestic stations were meant to minimize potential community opposition by blending in with their surroundings. In documenting the evolution of the Domestic filling station, John Jakle has identified three different types: House, House with Canopy, and House with Bays.<sup>4</sup> The Four Nineteen Building

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid, p. 27.

<sup>4</sup> John Jakle, "The American Gasoline Station, 1920 to 1970." Journal of American Culture, Vol. 1, 1979.

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is a combination of two station types a House with Canopy and House with Bays making it a House with Canopy and Bays.

The earliest Domestic stations consisted of a small house with a hipped or gabled roof. The building contained the attendant's office, and sometimes included small storage rooms and/or public rest rooms. The Pure Oil Company pioneered the standardization of the Domestic station and adopted an "English Cottage" style, with a steeply pitched roof of blue tiles, end chimneys, walls of white stucco and shuttered windows on all sides.<sup>5</sup> Other companies quickly developed their own series of Domestic stations, and many other rural cottage models appeared in rapid succession.

Although English Cottage was the most popular style for Domestic stations, other styles were also adapted, such as Colonial, Classical Revival and Spanish Mission. In all of these company-owned, standardized stations, architectural features were adapted to meet marketing needs. For example, roofing materials and trim featured company colors to remind motorists of the brand and unify the station's design. Many Domestic stations were prefabricated, and facing materials included brick, stucco, zinc or steel. To complete the idyllic setting of the Domestic station, many owners tried to disguise their utilitarian nature by moving or hiding the gasoline pumps at the rear of the structure, while car maintenance functions, such as washing parlors and lubritoriums were typically housed in separate structures.

As the filling station became a more accepted feature of the landscape, gasoline pumps were brought into the open and often situated beneath canopies that were attached to the station and supported by columns. A prefabricated prototype of a House with Canopy was pioneered by Standard Oil of Ohio as early as 1916.<sup>6</sup> Gulf Refining Company followed Standard's lead with a brick and tile roof station with a canopy supported by four brick columns covering two front

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<sup>5</sup> Keith A. Sculle, "C.A. Peterson: Pioneer Gas Station Architect," Historic Illinois, June 1979.

<sup>6</sup> Jakle, p. 527.

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driveways.<sup>7</sup> Standard Oil of New York added canopies to its "Colonial" stations in 1923, which carried iron balustrades to simulate porches.<sup>8</sup>

After 1925 the House with Bays type emerged, which represented a change in the function of the filling station. No longer used solely for gasoline distribution, this new type of one-stop super station also provided automotive maintenance for customers. The bays were typically equipped with grease pits and lifts, which encouraged motorists to regard the gas station as an alternative to the repair shop. Grease pits consisted of open trenches with walls of poured concrete or masonry. Cars were elevated slightly above the pits on ramps that straddled the trench.<sup>9</sup> By diversifying the products and services offered at their stations, oil companies hoped to gain a commercial advantage during a period of fierce competition. Besides washing and lubricating, engine, brake and other repair services were usually available. Products such as motor oil, tires, batteries and other accessories became standard in most stations, while courtesy windshield wiping and oil checks aimed to promote goodwill and increase sales.

The Four Nineteen building is located in Chicago's Chatham community, which is roughly bounded by 79<sup>th</sup> Street to the north, 91<sup>st</sup> Street to the south, the Illinois Central tracks to the east and Stewart Street to the west. Chatham's first structures were corn cribs built in 1860 by the Illinois Central Railroad along its tracks. Most of Chatham remained grassland and swamp until the 1880s, when it was settled by Italian stone masons and railroad workers who erected frame houses in the area. Originally part of the Village of Hyde Park, Chatham was annexed to the City of Chicago in 1889.<sup>10</sup>

In 1920, the Illinois Central Railroad opened a 79<sup>th</sup> Street station in Chatham, signaling the start of a decade-long residential building boom that was fueled by manufacturing growth. Newly

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Mae Gregory. Chatham 1856-1987: A Community of Excellence. Sponsored by The Friends of The Chicago Public Library, 1989.

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established factories along the Illinois Central tracks to the east, and between 83<sup>rd</sup> and 87<sup>th</sup> Streets to the west, supplied an influx of residents to Chatham, where population increased from 10,000 in 1920 to more than 36,000 by 1930.<sup>11</sup> Numerous apartment buildings, bungalows and commercial structures were erected during this time.

Four Nineteen was officially opened for business on December 21, 1928,<sup>12</sup> during Chatham's most prosperous decade. The structure was constructed as a business venture by owners William D. Meyering and David L. Sutton, both of whom were involved in the real estate business and prominent members of the local community. In 1923, William Meyering started his own real estate and insurance company, and began a stint as Chicago's 8<sup>th</sup> Ward Alderman that lasted until 1930. Meyering also served as Sheriff of Cook County from 1930 to 1934.<sup>13</sup> David Sutton was President of Sutton and Peterson Inc., a real estate firm located at 8124 Cottage Grove Avenue, Chicago, and served as 8<sup>th</sup> Ward Alderman from 1931 to 1935.<sup>14</sup>

Four Nineteen was constructed rapidly, as Meyering and Sutton assumed ownership of the property on August 24, 1928, and the structure was completed just three months later. The owners' original building announcement described Four Nineteen as a "Deluxe Gas Station and Greasing Palace," and stated that "Our modern equipment and skilled mechanics guarantee complete satisfaction." According to this announcement, the station was originally serviced by Shell gasoline. However, on April 9, 1929, the structure was leased to Marland Refining Company, which transferred its lease to Conoco Oil Company on September 3, 1929.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Steven Neufeld and Annie Ruth Leslie. *Community Area 44: Chatham*. In: *The Chicago Fact Book Consortium, ed. Local Community Fact Book, Chicago Metropolitan Area, 1990*. Chicago: Academy Chicago Publishers, 1995, p. 142.

<sup>12</sup> The opening date of Four Nineteen and the names of its original owners were obtained from an original building announcement for the structure. This announcement was given to current owner Yvonne Polk by Lawrence Betz, one of the structure's previous owners.

<sup>13</sup> *Who's Who in Chicago and Vicinity*. The A.N. Marquis Company, 1941.

<sup>14</sup> *Chicago Tribune*, obituary for David L. Sutton, January 2, 1965.

<sup>15</sup> Chain of Title for the Four Nineteen building. Source: Cook County Recorder of Deeds.

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Four Nineteen stands as an excellent example of the combination of two filling station types, a House with Canopy and Bays filling station, and has retained its original integrity in terms of materials and plan. The house is represented by the north elevation's central portion, which is visually distinguished by a front facing gabled brick parapet. A gabled canopy supported by two brick piers is attached to the house portion of the structure, which is flanked by two garage bays on each side. Aside from the removal of its original garage doors, Four Nineteen's exterior is unchanged from its original appearance. All elevations have retained their original steel casement windows, concrete sills and wood lintels. The north elevation features two original wood paneled doors and hardware. The north parapet and gabled canopy have also retained their original, multi-colored Mission tiles, while original wood stick work can be seen above the garage bays and the canopy's wood pediment.

Inside, Four Nineteen's rectangular plan has maintained its original configuration of three primary spaces—a central office flanked by a greasing room in the east bays, and what was likely a car washing/repair room in the west bays. Especially noteworthy are the two full-sized grease pits that remain in the east bays, stretching between its north and south walls. These pits originally provided “high pressure greasing”<sup>16</sup> for customers' automobiles. After 1925, rotary lifts operated by air compressors gradually replaced grease pits in most stations.<sup>17</sup>

In addition to standing as a well-preserved example of a House with Canopy and Bays filling station, Four Nineteen is also distinctive for its use of a Chicago innovation (according to the Cleveland, Ohio based publication, Building Economy)—clinker bricks laid in a skintled pattern. Clinker bricks have a swelled, cracked appearance created by overexposure to heat while they were baked in coal-fired kilns, and come in a wide variety of colors, such as reds, yellows and browns. Clinkers were traditionally considered cast-off bricks and sent to the dump heap. Chicago architects began to use them as a facing material in the 1920s, and their popularity quickly spread throughout the country. A May 1927 issue of Building Economy documented the changing taste in façade treatments, reporting that “brickwork is rapidly undergoing a radical change at the hands of the leading architects in this country... Today the

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<sup>16</sup> This phrase was printed on Four Nineteen's original building announcement.

<sup>17</sup> Jakle, p. 527.

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brickwork which catches the public eye must be rough, very rough. And the brick themselves must be of the same order. *Clinker brick, which only a few years ago had no market at all, are now in perhaps the highest favor of them all.*<sup>18</sup> (Emphasis added.)

A skintled wall is created by laying bricks roughly at different angles, recessing or projecting them beyond the wall line. In January 1927, Building Economy noted that the "Chicago practice of laying up skintled brickwork has been to sprinkle the surface liberally with the fused, blackened and glossy clinker brick, which in the last few years have leaped so strongly into popular favor...Irregularity is the predominant feature of any wall of skintled brickwork, yet the mass effect is extremely pleasing both as to color and texture."<sup>19</sup>

It is also interesting to note that architects and builders considered skintled brickwork to be very compatible with a Mission tile roof, a combination that was used in Four Nineteen. A May 1927 issue of Building Economy praised Mission tile when used in connection with a wall of common brick, noting that "Some of the most appealing examples in the Chicago district are those where the *combination is tile and skintled brickwork.*"<sup>20</sup> (Emphasis added.)

Clinkers and skintled brickwork were likely chosen Four Nineteen because the combination was considered both inexpensive and visually attractive. Today, structures composed of clinkers are a rarity, as they can only be produced the old-fashioned way---in coal fired kilns. As a result, The Brickyard in Harrisonville, Missouri<sup>21</sup> and Colonial Brick Company in Cayuga, Indiana<sup>22</sup> are among the few companies that currently produce clinker bricks. Both of these companies purchased abandoned brick plants and use kilns built in the early part of this century. The use of

<sup>18</sup> "Two Doorways Which Speak for Common Brick." Building Economy. May 1927, No. 3, No. 4.

<sup>19</sup> "Dozen Kinds of Brick in These Skintled Walls." Building Economy. July 1927, Vol. 3.

<sup>20</sup> "Tile Roofs Add a Very Definite Distinction." Building Economy. May 1927, No. 3, No. 4.

<sup>21</sup> Marketing materials from The Brickyard, Harrisonville, Missouri.

<sup>22</sup> Andy Shaw, "His Devotion to bricks is more than a 'clinker'." Chicago Tribune. June 28, 1998.

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these materials is also notable for what it represents—the choice of individual owners to select the design and materials for their stations, as opposed to company-owned stations that utilized standardized designs and prefabricated materials.

Beginning in the 1930s, companies began to opt for stripped-down, functional filling station designs known as oblong boxes—featuring flat roofs, large expanses of plate glass and walls of porcelain enamel in response to the harsh economic times.<sup>23</sup> As a result, Four Nineteen stands today as one of the few remaining House with Canopy and Bays stations on Chicago's south side. For this nomination, a January 1999 windshield survey was conducted over a broad area encompassing 67<sup>th</sup> Street on the north, 115<sup>th</sup> Street on the south, Lake Michigan on the east, and Ashland Avenue on the west. A total of sixteen pre-1945 stations, located in ten different neighborhoods, were identified. These sixteen stations include three Houses, one House with Canopy, nine Houses with Bays, and three Houses with Canopies and Bays.<sup>24</sup>

Four Nineteen exhibits the best exterior integrity of these sixteen Domestic stations, and is the only one constructed of clinker bricks. In addition, only one other station demonstrates skintling, albeit on a very limited scale, with occasional bricks protruding beyond an otherwise smooth wall plane. Very few of these stations have retained their original doors, windows or roofing materials, while some have been drastically altered, and most exist in a deteriorated state. Of the three House stations (7701 S. Racine; 7820 S. Vincennes, 9201 S. Manistee), all have lost their original doors, windows and roofing materials. The one House with Canopy (7659 S. Ashland) has lost its original entrance door, windows and roofing material, and has been converted to a dry cleaning establishment.

Of the nine Houses with Bays, three stations appear to have retained at least one original steel sash window (8437 S. Commercial; 9200 S. Ashland; 7714 S. Exchange), while only one station appears to have retained its original entrance door (7714 S. Exchange). Four of these stations have paneled wood overhead garage doors (8437 S. Commercial; 8059 S. Vincennes; 9200 S. Ashland; 7714 S. Exchange), although it is difficult to determine whether they are original. Five of the Houses with Bays appear to have retained some original roofing material, in the form of

<sup>23</sup> Jakle, p. 530.

<sup>24</sup> See attached continuation sheet with charts showing breakdown of south side Domestic gas stations identified by windshield survey.



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slate or clay tiles (8437 S. Commercial; 9310 S. Commercial; 9200 S. Ashland; 10130 S. Michigan; 7714 S. Exchange).

Of the three Houses with Canopies and Bays, all appear to have received their bays at a later date. On one structure, the canopy's two original brick columns have been replaced with iron posts (7342 S. Exchange). Only one station appears to have retained its original door, along with steel sash windows (7256 S. Ashland). None of these stations has retained original roofing materials.

The loss of historic filling stations on the south side of Chicago constitutes an irreplaceable gap in one component of the City's architectural heritage. Four Nineteen is an important example of a dwindling number of Domestic gas stations that were once common features throughout Chicago's neighborhoods. The structure's use of clinker bricks laid in a skintled pattern also represents an innovation that originated in Chicago, quickly gained popularity and spread to other parts of the country. Clinker bricks are rarely used on buildings today, as they are only produced by a handful of brickyards that have coal-fired kilns. As a wonderful remnant of Chicago's early automotive history, Four Nineteen is certainly worthy of recognition and listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

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### House

Station Address	Zip Code	Community	Construction Date
7820 S. Vincennes	60620	Grand Crossing	1920s
9201 S. Manistee	60617	Calumet Heights	1923
7701 S. Racine	60620	Auburn Gresham	1924

### House with Canopy

Station Address	Zip Code	Community	Construction Date
7659 S. Ashland	60620	Englewood	1923

### House with Bays

Station Address	Zip Code	Community	Construction Date
8437 S. Commercial	60617	South Chicago	1930s
9310 S. Commercial	60617	South Chicago	1937
7901 S. Avalon	60619	Avalon Park	1930
8059 S. Vincennes	60620	Chatham	1930s
8800 S. Ashland	60620	Auburn Gresham	1920s
9200 S. Ashland	60620	Washington Heights	1931
10130 S. Michigan Ave.	60628	Roseland	1930s
11244 S. Wentworth	60628	Roseland	1930s
7714 South Exchange	60649	South Shore	1927

### House with Canopy and Bays

Station address	Zip code	Neighborhood	Construction Date
7342 S. Exchange	60649	South Shore	1929
7256 S. Ashland	60636	Englewood	1926
8597 South Chicago	60617	Avalon Park	1924

\* Note: Construction dates were obtained from the 1994 Cook County Property Index records. This composite information is derived solely from records of the Cook County Assessors Office.

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**Four Nineteen Building: Geographical Data**

**Verbal Boundary Description**

Lots Forty-Nine (49) and Fifty ( 50) in Whiteside and Totten's subdivision of Block Three (3) of E.A. Warfields Subdivision of the West Half (W ½), of Southeast Quarter (SE ¼) of Section Thirty-Four (34), Township Thirty-Eight (38), North, Range Fourteen (14), East of the Third Principal Meridian.

Source: Cook County Assessor's Office, Chicago, Illinois.

**Boundary Justification**

The Four Nineteen building retains its historic boundaries as stated in the Verbal Boundary Description.